



BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 665

RIN 0648-XG025

Pacific Island Pelagic Fisheries; 2018 U.S. Territorial

Longline Bigeye Tuna Catch Limits for American Samoa

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Announcement of a valid specified fishing agreement.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces a valid specified fishing agreement that allocates up to 1,000 metric tons (t) of the 2018 bigeye tuna limit for the Territory of American Samoa to identified U.S. longline fishing vessels. The agreement supports the long-term sustainability of fishery resources of the U.S. Pacific Islands, and fisheries development in American Samoa.

DATES: *[insert date of filing for public inspection at the Office of the FEDERAL REGISTER].*

ADDRESSES: NMFS prepared environmental analyses that describe the potential impacts on the human environment that would result from the action. The analyses, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2018-0026, are available from

<https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2018-0026>,
or from Michael D. Tosatto, Regional Administrator, NMFS
Pacific Islands Region (PIR), 1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176,
Honolulu, HI 96818.

The Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Pelagic Fisheries of
the Western Pacific (Pelagic FEP) is available from the
Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), 1164
Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813, tel 808-522-
8220, fax 808-522-8226, or *<http://www.wpcouncil.org>*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rebecca Walker, NMFS PIRO
Sustainable Fisheries, 808-725-5184.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In a final rule published on
October 23, 2018, NMFS specified a 2018 limit of 2,000 t of
longline-caught bigeye tuna for the U.S. Pacific Island
territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the CNMI (83 FR
53399). NMFS allows each territory to allocate up to 1,000
t of the 2,000 t limit to U.S. longline fishing vessels
identified in a valid specified fishing agreement.

On November 19, 2018, NMFS received from the Council a
specified fishing agreement between the government of
American Samoa and Quota Management, Inc. (QMI). The
Council's Executive Director advised that the specified
fishing agreement was consistent with the criteria set
forth in 50 CFR 665.819(c)(1). NMFS reviewed the agreement

and determined that it is consistent with the Pelagic FEP,
the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management
Act, implementing regulations, and other applicable laws.

In accordance with 50 CFR 300.224(d) and 50 CFR 665.819(c) (9), vessels identified in the agreement may retain and land bigeye tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean under the American Samoa limit. NMFS will begin attributing bigeye tuna caught by vessels identified in the agreement to American Samoa starting on December 10, 2018. This is seven days before December 17, 2018, which is the date NMFS forecasted the fishery would reach the CNMI bigeye tuna allocation limit. If NMFS determines that the fishery will reach the American Samoa 1,000-t attribution, we would restrict the retention of bigeye tuna caught by vessels identified in the agreement, unless the vessels are included in a subsequent specified fishing agreement with another U.S. territory, and we would publish a notice to that effect in the *Federal Register*.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: December 4, 2018.

Alan D. Risenhoover,
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

